



## ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

*Dr. Tom W. Kimbrell, Commissioner*

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### **News Release**

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### **SPRINGDALE TEACHER WINS MILKEN AWARD IN ARKANSAS**

LITTLE ROCK — Andrea Morales McKenna, a teacher at J.O. Kelly Middle School in Springdale, was presented today with the prestigious Milken Educator Award, one of education's most coveted distinctions. She received the award during a surprise visit from Gov. Mike Beebe and Education Commissioner Dr. Tom Kimbrell.

"Andrea is the teacher every principal is looking for," J.O. Kelly principal Sara Ford said. "She is at the top of her game, and she understands our students because she's been there. Andrea was an English Language Learner. She was also the perennial new kid in school, being the daughter of non-English speaking migrant workers. All of her life experiences have prepared her to be the powerful teacher and mentor she is today."

The Milken Family Foundation presents each winner of the Milken award nationwide with \$25,000. During the award's 25-year history more than 2,500 teachers have been honored. Winners are chosen based on having exceptional educational talent, displaying exemplary educational accomplishments, posting unheralded but worthy contributions, being early-to-mid-career educators with

strong potential, and having an inspiring presence.

McKenna teaches English as Second Language classes for 6th and 7th graders. She has taught in Springdale since 2002. Previously, she taught two years in the Dallas Independent School District in Dallas, Texas. She has a bachelor's degree from Southwestern Assemblies of God University in Waxahachie, Texas.

"Talented teachers such as Ms. McKenna are a key ingredient in our efforts to keep students excited and engaged in learning so they stay in school and graduate prepared for the future," said Kimbrell.